



Working Lands Alliance
A Project of American Farmland Trust

To: GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Date: Mar 16, 2009

RE: H.B. 6375 - AN ACT CONCERNING REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF CERTAIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS. Section 1- regarding termination of the following governmental entities:

- (5) Face of Connecticut Steering Committee, established under section 22a-27s of the general statutes;
- (14) Connecticut Food Policy Council, established under section 22-456 of the general statutes;

Submitted by: Jiff Martin, Project Director, Working Lands Alliance

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Working Lands Alliance, a statewide coalition of over 600 individuals and 200 businesses and non-profits committed to increasing the state's commitment to farmland preservation.

Working Lands Alliance opposes the elimination of 1) Face of Connecticut Steering Committee and 2) Connecticut Food Policy Council.

The Face of Connecticut Steering Committee is intended to provide a decision-making structure that will overcome the failure of state agencies to work together on investment priorities that will impact our state's long-term character. Established in 2008, all members of this body have not yet been appointed, nor has there been any funding commitment yet made to the accompanying Face of Connecticut Account (also established in 2008). However, a failure to move forward on this concept will only perpetuate the practice of state agencies making green and brown investments in isolation of each other. Moreover, the premature termination of this body will undermine legislative proposals also moving forward this session that will rely on this Steering Committee to allocate bonding to farmland, brownfields, historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space.

The CT Food Policy Council's greatest strength has been providing a forum for communication and information sharing between state agencies on programs that affect nutrition and agriculture. Many of these programs derive partial funding through federal sources and demand creative collaboration across state and university entities in order to improve efficiency and increase coverage to Connecticut families and children. The Council has historically been funded at an annual rate of \$25,000. In 2003-2004, the Council was able to leverage an additional \$150,000 in Federal funds through the Community Food Projects Grant Program. With or without funding, elimination of this Council will preclude ever qualifying in the future for similar federal grant funds and will undermine a practical means to improving state food and agriculture programs to best serve state residents.